During his visit, the Prime Minister conveyed to the Government and people of Pakistan India's deep desire for peace and friendship with them and to develop a comprehensive structure of cooperation for the benefit of the two peoples. The Prime Minister and the Pakistan Prime Minister signed the Lahore Declaration which is a landmark for the peace and security of the two countries. India and Pakistan will now work to enter into agreements to put into place far-reaching Confidence Building Measures. The two countries also identified new and significant areas of cooperation such as information technology, and decided to address humanitarian issues at a ministerial level on an urgent basis. Government expect that the Prime Minister's historic initiative, and his reiteration that a secure, stable and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest, will mark a new chapter in our bilateral ties.

Discussions with various countries on the Nuclear Issue

979. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any extensive discussions have taken place between India and the Governments of Russia, France, Japan and the U.K. on the nuclear issues; and

(b) if so, what is the outcome of these discussions?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir, India is engaged in a dialogue with key interlocutors viz US, France, Russia and UK on the basis of a set of voluntary proposals made by India after concluding the limited series of underground nuclear tests in May 1998. Talks have also been held with Japan.

(b) These discussions have led to a better understanding of India's security concerns and its responsible record on disarmament and non-proliferation. Our interlocutors have also acknowledged the value of the voluntary steps taken by India after the nuclear tests. The prescriptive agenda evident immediately after the tests has given way to a narrower, constructive framework and some of the restrictive economic measures announced by some countries after the tests have been withdrawn. The dialogues are continuing.

Rail and road services between India and Pakistan

980. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether rail and road services between India and Pakistan have begun as a confidence building measure between the two countries; and

(b) if so, how this traffic is being regulated and what is the to and fro frequency of rail and road services indicating the starting points and destinations in the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) An India-Pakistan Agreement and a Protocol, providing a framework and an operational mechanism for the Delhi-Lahore/Lahore-Delhi bus service were signed in Islamabad on 17th February, 1999. Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee travelled to Lahore in the inaugural bus journey from the Indian side on 20th February, 1999.

Under the Protocol the Indian bus will be operated by Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and Pakistan Trourism Development Corporation (PTDC) will be the operator of the Pakistani bus. Under the current arrangement, the DTC bus would operate from Delhi to Lahore on Tuesdays and Fridays, and from Lahore to Delhi on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The PTDC bus will similarly operate from Lahore to Delhi on Tuesdays and Fridays, and from Delhi to Lahore on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The regular bus service will soon become operational.

A passenger and goods train service between India and Pakistan has been